

REMARKS

1. Summary of the Office Action

In the Office action mailed September 7, 2007, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 7, 9-13, 15, 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable based on Zuniga (U.S. U.S. 2003/0218974) and the background of Stilwell et al. (U.S. 6,137,773) (hereinafter referred to as Stilwell) in combination with one or more of Love et al. (U.S. 2004/0219920) (hereinafter referred to as Love), Meyer et al. (U.S. 6,236,866), Lee et al. (U.S. 7,158,812), and Ghandi et al. (U.S. 2003/0022630). Of these claims, 1 and 9 are in independent form, and the rest are in dependent form. The Examiner also indicated that claims 6, 8, 14, and 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

2. Status of the Claims

Applicants herein have amended independent claims 1 and 9 to include the elements of claims 8 and 14, respectively, and amended claim 14 and canceled claim 8 accordingly. Applicants therefore submit all pending claims, claims 1-7 and 9-18, as currently in condition for allowance and respectfully request favorable reconsideration in view of the following remarks.

3. Response to Rejections

As noted, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 4, 9 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zuniga and Stilwell in view of Love, but indicated that claims 8 and 14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants herein have amended independent claims 1 and 9 to include the elements of claims 8 and 14, respectively. The Applicants respectfully submit that the amended claims 1 and 9 render the rejection moot because Zuniga, the primary reference does not teach all the elements of the pending claims, and Stilwell and Love, the secondary references cited by the Examiner, are also deficient.

With regard to the pending dependent claims 2-3, 5-7, 10-11, and 13-18, Applicants point out that each of these claims depend from and incorporate the limitations from at least one of independent claims 1 and 9, which, as discussed above, are allowable over the cited art. Accordingly, claims 2-3, 5-7, 10-11, and 13-18 are allowable for at least the reason that they each depend from an allowable claim. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of the pending dependent claims.

6. Conclusion

The Applicants submit that the application is in good and proper form for allowance and respectfully request the Examiner to pass this application to issue. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at 312-913-3305.

Respectfully submitted,

McDONNELL BOEHNEN
HULBERT & BERGHOFF LLP

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By:Robert J. Irvine III/
Robert J. Irvine III
Registration No. 41,865